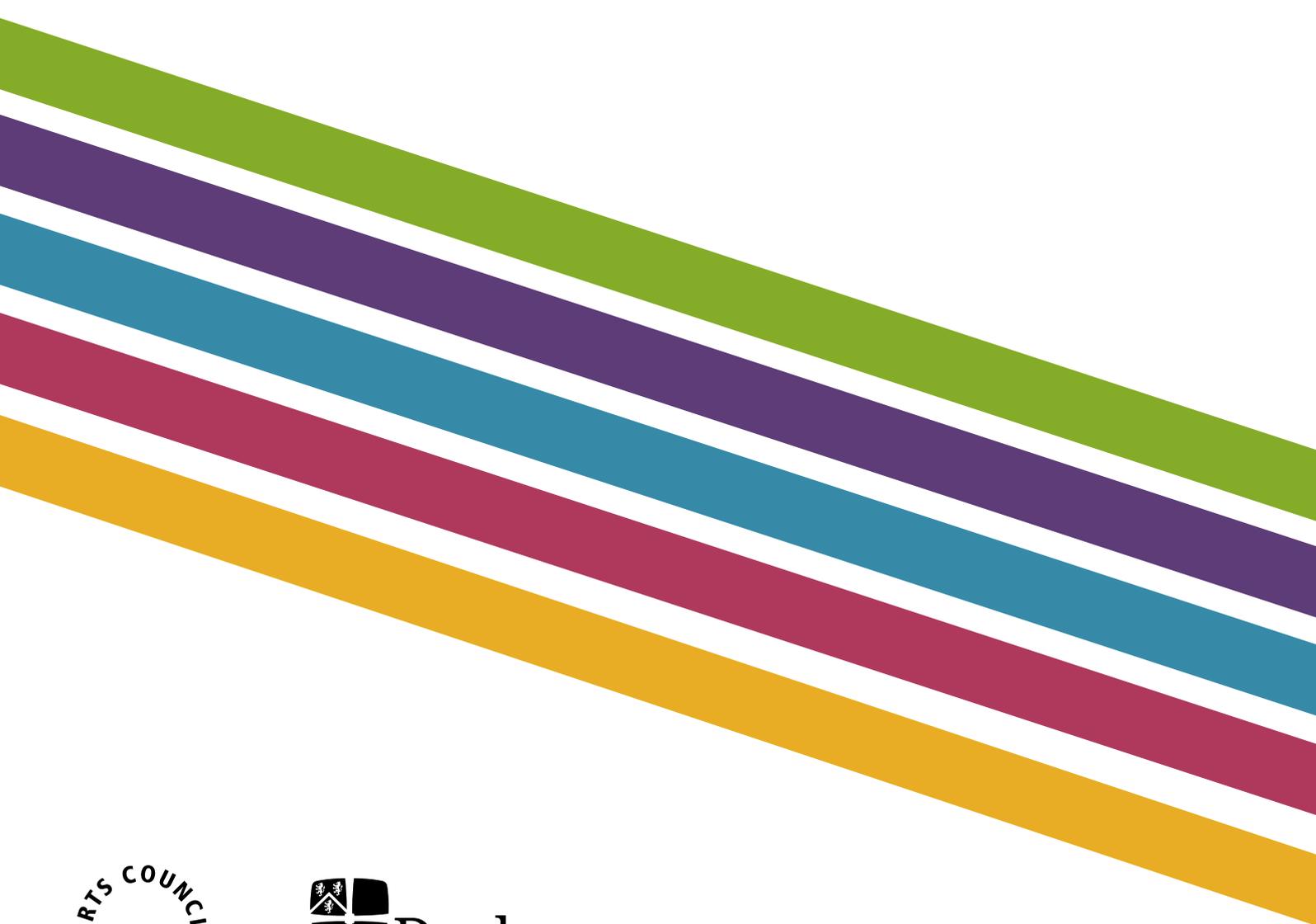


# Durham Commission on Creativity and Education – second report 2021



The Creativity Exchange is a space for school leaders, teachers, those working in cultural organisations, scientists, researchers and parents to share ideas about how to teach for creativity and develop young people's creativity at and beyond school.

<https://www.creativityexchange.org.uk/>

### **Acknowledgement**

Our thanks to Will Cochu, author of the report, who has worked assiduously to gather information and the views of interviewees.



# CONTENTS

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Findings and recommendations</b>	<b>8</b>
What we found	9
<b>What the Durham Commission will do</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Annexe 1</b>	<b>21</b>
Our research	22
<b>Annexe 2</b>	<b>47</b>
Recommendations of the first Commission report 2019	48
<b>Annexe 3</b>	<b>50</b>
Durham Commission definitions	51
<b>Annexe 4</b>	<b>52</b>
The Commissioners	53

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2019, the first report of The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education made recommendations as to how creativity and teaching for creativity could be integral to the preparation for life for all young people. Since then, Covid-19 has changed the landscape of education. While the Commission believes all its initial recommendations to have been prescient, some are now particularly urgent.

In order to determine its next steps, the Commission drew on: a literature review by researchers at Durham University that focused on the impact of the first lockdown on the education of young people; national and international reports on the economic consequences of Covid-19; and one-to-one and group interviews with senior education staff, young people and policy shapers.

Analysis of this research revealed that:

1. Covid-19 has shown that creativity and cultural experiences are fundamental to the lives of young people and to the culture of schools and should be an essential part of the return to in-school education.
2. The rapid adoption of digital platforms by schools is an opportunity to increase the understanding and practice of teaching for creativity in schools. The shift to remote working and digital tools has reshaped society and the economy. As a consequence, digital literacy and the creative use of technology have become essential competencies for young people.
3. Universal access to teaching for creativity is not possible without addressing the current inequity in digital access. If we do not address this inequity, existing disparities of opportunity will be reinforced and we shall miss the chance to 'level up'. Digital skills and access to quality digital devices confer considerable advantage.

The Commission and its Advisory Board has therefore decided to focus in the immediate future on six of its initial 10 recommendations that target: system leadership and collaboration; digital technologies, creativity and education; creativity and the arts in schools; pre-school and the early years curriculum; creative opportunities out of school; and creative opportunities in the world of work.

Throughout Covid-19, teachers have shown extraordinary effort and determination to support students and their families; in the coming months there will be opportunities for both schools and students to re-think teaching and learning. The Commission will contribute to these efforts and help build on teachers' recent achievements, through the newly-launched Creativity Exchange online platform and the Creativity Collaboratives pilot programme. We will work with Arts Council England to integrate this work, along with the other five recommendations in the report below, into the delivery plan for the new 10-year strategy, *Let's Create*, providing a national focus for conversation and action on teaching for creativity.

# INTRODUCTION

It is 18 months since the Durham Commission on Creativity and Education launched its first report, in which we argued the need to anticipate and teach young people to be prepared for significant social, economic and environmental change. The Commission maintained that amid those changes, how young people's creativity was developed would have a crucial impact on their life chances. Events unfolded fast. Within months the UK was in the first national lockdown and Covid-19 had begun to reshape the world.

Our fresh report recognises the scale of change and the challenges it brings. We stand by all our original recommendations, which we believe were timely and prescient. However, some of these require dialogue with partners – such as Ofsted and Ofqual – who are now understandably preoccupied. We shall continue to have those conversations when we can, but for now we will be concentrating on working with Arts Council England, Durham University and other partners to deliver the recommendations that address the most urgent needs.

While this report shows how we will be sharpening the focus of our work, it also celebrates the resilience and determination of teachers, schools and young people across the country. In the past year, schools have often shown inspirational civic leadership, reminding us that their role extends far beyond the academic – that they are vital to the cohesion and values of society as a whole, and can be extraordinary pragmatic and practical resources.

Schools have done an amazing job of supporting and caring for pupils and their families. Of course, despite these efforts, young people have still had their world turned upside down. We do not know what that impact amounts to. Ofsted counselled last September that there will not be a detailed picture of the impact of Covid-19 on children's education for some time – we are still in the throes of the pandemic. However, this report, alongside other published literature, does show that young people's wellbeing has been deeply affected – The Prince's Trust Youth Index 2021 revealed that half of 16- to 25-year-olds consider that their mental health has worsened since the start of the pandemic.

It is also clear that existing inequity within the education system has been replicated and even enhanced in the shift to remote learning. It hasn't been equally bad for everyone. How you weathered the pandemic depends on how you entered the pandemic. As a recent report by the Sutton Trust reveals, there is an ongoing, vast difference between state and independent schools in terms of access to the internet devices and networks which determine the availability of remote learning. <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/School-Shutdown-Covid-19.pdf>

Inevitably much of this second report deals with the role and importance of technology. The pandemic has shown both the limits and the creative potential of digital tools. On the one hand, being online is no substitute for regular human contact and face-to-face encounters. Many young people have been intensely lonely and vulnerable. On the other hand, technology has given those with access, extraordinary communication tools, unlocking creative solutions to problems and enabling us to continue working and learning throughout the greatest crisis of our lifetimes.

The use of technology is here to stay: in future schools will have both a physical environment and a virtual one. If we do not ensure equality of access and teach young people how to use and control technology rather than be used by it, the virtual world will simply magnify the disparities of the physical world, and we will have missed a great opportunity for positive change.

As we argued in the first report, digital technology is a means to an end. It is not inherently creative, but at the disposal of a creatively liberated mind, its potential becomes boundless. We need better and more creative digital literacy to be available to all young people. As a nation, we often talk about the need to draw on all our diverse creative talent. Here, then, is the opportunity to reach and empower that nascent talent. Young people must have those skills. Technology is remaking their world and their potential employment. As whole sectors of the existing economy change shape, shrink or are washed away, new opportunities form for those with creative capacities, critical thinking and digital skills. This new phase of change has only just begun. There will be no simple 'end' to Covid-19. Getting 'back to normal' will mean getting up to speed and bringing resilience rather than over-optimism or resignation to our enjoyment of the present moment.

This is a watershed moment in education. The focus for the Commission will be to address the wellbeing of young people through their creativity, to support their return to school, and to give them the resources and creative capacities to shape the future. This means addressing the opportunities – and hazards – of this technological surge, advocating for equality of access, and putting creativity and teaching for creativity at the centre of young people's relationship with technology.

We have already begun. In January this year, with the Arts Council, we launched the Creativity Exchange, an online forum for schools and educators to share ideas and best practice on cultivating creativity and teaching for creativity. In May, one of the principal recommendations in our first report, the pilot programme of Creativity Collaboratives, will open for applications. Collaboratives will bring together schools to model pedagogies and practices that cultivate creativity in young people. The pilot will run for three years.

It will have national representation and it will reach children who are most disadvantaged by inequity.

As children return to school, how can we set about restoring and supporting an environment in which they feel comfortable learning? As many school leaders told us, it is impossible for them to separate the thread of academic excellence from the holistic culture of a school – its relationships, movement, music, conversation and laughter. You cannot ‘catch up’ academically without addressing the wider interests and experiences of young people and the soul of a school cannot return at a flick of a switch, especially when masks, distancing and testing will continue to be a source of anxiety.

School leaders have urged the importance of a ‘recovery curriculum’ – a programme which uses arts, culture and physical activity to celebrate the creativity of young people and bring life and happiness back to schools. The Commission welcomes this call to action and hopes that it will be supported by the Government’s Recovery Commissioner, who has indicated he knows that more is required than simply additional hours of academic work.

We have a chance to ensure good comes out of the events of the last year. If we emphasise the restorative role of cultural activity during this recovery period, we would be responding to what students have said about wanting a rounded curriculum. We would be building a launchpad for the long-term promotion of culture and creativity in schools and for a National Plan for Cultural Education. Crucially, such a change could also signal the start of a closer relationship between schools and the cultural sector through alignment with the delivery plan for Arts Council England’s new 10-year strategy. This is all realisable.

Finally it is right we should highlight the achievements of schools and teachers who have supported and cared for young people and their families, and built strong relationships across their communities. School leaders have told us that they see this civic leadership role as a natural part of their creative culture in schools. During the pandemic many schools have developed further understanding of the circumstances and needs of their pupils and their communities. Looking to the future, we should trust schools more to use this precious local knowledge, whether in terms of providing digital resources to pupils or balancing a curriculum with knowledge and creative skills. We thank the school leaders, teachers and young people for their input to this report and look forward to working with them in the coming years.

**Sir Nicholas Serota, CH**

Chair of The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education



# **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## WHAT WE FOUND

In preparing this report the Commission drew on: a literature review by researchers at Durham University that focused on the impact of the first lockdown on the education of young people; national and international reports on the economic consequences of Covid-19; and one-to-one and group interviews with senior education staff, young people and policy shapers.

<https://www.creativityexchange.org.uk/ideas-hub/durham-commission-literature-review>

### **1. Covid-19 has shown that creativity and cultural experiences are fundamental to the lives of young people and the culture of schools. We should use these experiences to celebrate the return to education as a rich and rewarding process.**

For the last year, young people have been denied creative and cultural experiences in schools. They told us how much they missed this and how personal creativity sustained many of them.

School leaders reminded us that many of their pupils will have suffered bereavement, spent the last year in acute isolation, or been trapped in abusive family situations; they will have forgotten how to participate in school, how to express themselves and how to have fun, let alone how to learn. While schools welcomed the ‘catch-up funding’, they questioned whether it could be usefully spent until a positive whole-school culture was re-established, the conditions for academic progress were restored and it is known what the individual objectives for ‘catching up’ might be.

Schools told us they see academic achievements as flourishing in a holistic environment that prioritises wellbeing and happiness and celebrates the creativity of pupils. It is not possible to have sustainable academic progress without rejuvenating this supportive context.

School leaders recognise the restorative value of creative and cultural activities and told us these should be intrinsic to a ‘recovery curriculum’ – a programme to address the wellbeing and happiness of young people and rebuild the confident collective environment that is necessary to productive academic work.

This programme would both complement and add to academic catch-up initiatives and have distinct objectives around wellbeing, confidence and peer engagement. It would celebrate the role of arts and culture in education and the creativity of young people and could mark the beginning of a much desired, closer long-term relationship between the educational and cultural sectors.

“We have learned how important creativity is and how kids have to have that. As soon as I can I’ll be going back to them having music and drama lessons. There’s got to be that joy. We’ve got to make sure that the kids are ready to learn and that there’s an equity in being ready to learn. That they have the right equipment. That they’ve all had breakfast. That when they sit down at that desk for the lesson, their headspace is right. That they are confident and can express themselves and have their own toolbox to do it with. That’s what creativity does for them, doesn’t it?”

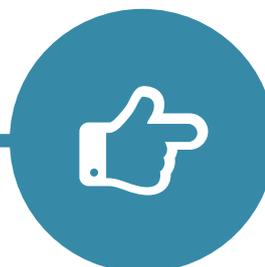
**Emma Aubrey, Headteacher, Dowdales School, Dalton, Cumbria (a co-educational 11-16 local authority school)**

“I’ve seen that creativity can be a route into how you engage with children, how you help them liberate their own feeling and skills, come to terms with difficult changes and develop personally. Ultimately creativity has a really strong overlap with confidence and agency – it’s about developing that confidence in your ability to have choices.”

**Anne Longfield, former Children’s Commissioner**

“Our intention is that all pupils will become confident communicators, independent problem solvers, creatively empowered, emotionally and physically resilient, socially skilled and positively included. In being creatively empowered, you’re going to be a better communicator, a better problem solver, and more involved with your community; so all areas intertwine.”

**Abi Steady, Deputy Headteacher, Ashmount School, Loughborough (SEN school for pupils aged 4-19)**



## **2. The rapid adoption of digital platforms is an opportunity to increase the understanding and practice of teaching for creativity in schools.**

While provision for remote learning was uneven across the country, it improved substantially over the course of a year that contained three national lockdowns. However, our literature review shows that access to remote learning continued to be shaped by pre-existing inequality, while both educators and students told us that too many of the remote offers consisted of uploaded conventional lessons and that they needed better digital pedagogies.

Digital learning is now established as an important element of teaching, either in itself or as part of a ‘blended’ approach. School leaders told us that it allows targeted learning and the effective use of resources to benefit those most in need, and that it can potentially encourage creative and interactive ways of delivering the curriculum. Moreover, periodic resurgences of Covid-19 – and perhaps other zoonotic viruses – may continue to interrupt live schooling for years to come. Every school now needs to occupy both virtual and physical spaces.

Digital pedagogies are evolving and are open to new ideas and approaches, with digital platforms being used to offer both remote and face-to-face learning. They offer ways to reach and engage with teachers who are interested in but unfamiliar with teaching for creativity. Technology can add a skills dimension to knowledge-based learning and encourage cross-curriculum thinking. In life after school, digital literacy will be a basic skill requirement given the shift in the economy to remote and home working, the increased pace of automation and the demand for tech skills.

Covid-19 has powered a realignment in the economy that will have a particular impact on young people whose first jobs are often in retail or hospitality. In retail alone, nearly 180,000 jobs were lost in the UK in 2020, up by almost a quarter on the previous year, according to the Centre for Retail Research which has predicted up to 200,000 more retail jobs will be at risk in 2021. In March this year the ONS reported that the number of those not in education, employment or training rose sharply by 39,000 to 797,000 in the final three months of 2020, with young men being particularly affected.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has highlighted how Covid-19 has given impetus to automation. It estimates that by 2025, 85 million jobs worldwide may be displaced by a shift in the division of labour between humans and machines, while 97 million new roles may emerge that are more adapted to a new division of labour between humans, machines and algorithms.

The loss of unskilled jobs has been complemented by a demand for creative capacities. The WEF predicts an increase in demand for such skills such as critical thinking and analysis, problem-solving, active learning, resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility – capacities that can be developed through teaching for creativity.

The WEF's perspective was echoed in a survey of 500 businesses by Opinium for Page Personnel (published 2021), which showed that communication is now the most valued skill among employers, who generally favoured 'soft skills' over more traditional skills.

Educators will have to show a proactive response to these new needs in how they teach or find their relevance questioned by students. In its first report, the Commission called for more and better quality digital literacy that would empower young people to use and shape the digital dimension rather than be cultivated by it as consumers. Young people that we spoke to for this report were aware of the changes taking place in the world of work, concerned about their future employment, and wanted their education to better reflect the blend of knowledge and skills they need to be in control of their lives.

“Throughout this period there’s been a huge change in understanding about the strengths and weaknesses of technology and its use in education – and an enormous step forward in the maturity of use of technology. All this is incredibly useful. I hope it brings a much less polarised discussion about the value of technology. In terms of wider change – we can all see some big economic impacts – and what that may mean for the school curriculum, that is a deeper question.”

**Sir Jon Coles, CEO United Learning (a multi-academy trust)**

“You’re not necessarily going to find standard career patterns in the future. You probably won’t find yourself in the office environment where you create your knowledge and skills, professional and personal, in collaboration with those alongside you. You may work remotely, work a four-day week, or not work in the traditional way at all. How do we prepare people for this? What part can creativity play to help people use their time effectively to develop that deeper reflection that you might have got from the stimulus of your peers? And how do you build resilience to tackle the increased loneliness and isolation that may become characteristics of our working pattern?”

**Jonathan Culpin CEO, Anglian Learning (a multi-academy trust based in East Anglia)**

“ (Teachers) need to be more supportive, maybe do a different range of things in the session, be more creative. They should come up with ways in the learning environment to motivate, and to encourage confidence. So it boosts skills and creativity.”

**17-year-old male, Tamworth**

“In individual subjects, school has done well in terms of getting us prepared for what’s to come. But I think in general, for life in the next few months, in the next couple of years – whatever we’re doing, after education – I think they definitely could help us with that.”

**16-year-old male, London**

### 3. Universal access to teaching for creativity is not possible without addressing the current inequity in digital access.

Pandemics magnify existing inequities across society; the relationship between Covid-19 and existing socio-economic divides has been highlighted in reports by Michael Marmot (*Build Back Fairer*) <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review> and Anne Longfield, the former Children's Commissioner (*Childhood in the time of Covid*) <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/childhood-in-the-time-of-covid/>. Divisions that apply to health and life expectancy apply to educational opportunities. As our literature review shows, if a school was well resourced before Covid-19, it was more likely to have digital platforms and a remote offer that will have sustained and increased the educational advantage enjoyed by its pupils. Although schools' provision generally improved through the last year, there remained shocking discrepancies in access to hardware and networks. A recent report by the Sutton Trust looking at the situation prior to the January 2021 lockdown shows that just 5 per cent of teachers in state schools reported that all their students have access to an appropriate device for remote learning, compared to 54 per cent at private schools. For adequate internet access, the figures were 5 and 51 per cent respectively <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/learning-in-lockdown/>.

We must address this imbalance, or the chance to level up educational opportunities and promote teaching for creativity in this new learning dimension may be lost, leading to a larger digital divide and a further increase in overall inequity. Both virtual and physical teaching environments will favour those who already enjoy substantial advantages. The flourishing of new creative pedagogies will not reach those who most need them. From the Commission's perspective, digital inequity must be removed, not as an adjunct to delivering creativity in education, but as the means to promote it.

While the Government did make substantial provision to provide laptops, it could not meet demand. School leaders we interviewed reported significant problems with supply and with the quality of laptops. Many have had to use their school's resources to fill the gaps. A theme in our conversations was that the complexity of the problem was not previously recognised, either by Government or by schools. There is, for example, no point in supplying hardware if pupils lack access to networks or data; many may also have devices – often just a phone – but have to share them with siblings or parents.

It was clear that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. However, from our research and gathering of data, we point to the local knowledge and agency that schools have acquired over the last year as offering the basis for the best way forward. We want to capture and build on that knowledge and experience while it remains fresh.

The civic role of schools has been more widely recognised during the pandemic. Parents faced with the struggle of home schooling have come to appreciate the wider contribution made by teachers to the lives of their

children. School leaders we interviewed described civic engagement as an important part of a creative school culture, and schools have affirmed their role as vital community hubs. Many schools have filled gaps in social care, looking after children, assisting their families and delivering essential supplies across their communities. In March, a YouGov poll revealed that one in five schools had established food banks.

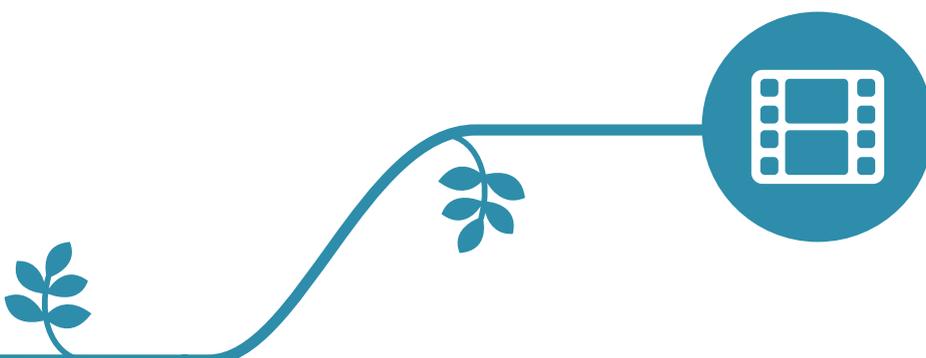
Schools have emerged with a more detailed understanding of their pupils' needs and stronger and more positive relationships with their communities. This equips them to be the best agencies to evaluate and deliver the local elements of a national strategy that could address this digital divide, be it through the provision of hardware or networks to students, or the development of creative pedagogies relevant to their pupils. Schools should be resourced and supported to put that local knowledge to use.

“ Schools have learned a lot about families. Prior to Covid-19, many schools worked hard at parental-school engagement, but lots didn't. Hence they didn't know if children had Wi-Fi connectivity, devices for learning online at home etc. It's clear that educators really do need to know the families. We are now all ambassadors for out-of-school learning as much as in-school. I don't think that all teachers saw themselves as having that brief prior to the pandemic.”

**Rachel Macfarlane, Director of Education Services, Herts for Learning**

“ Our families have always valued education and during lockdown they relied upon our phone calls, newsletters and video blogs and website advice and our company – a friendly and trusting voice. As a school we worked hard to provide a variety of lessons and activities – including family activities. I think this has opened some parents' minds from thinking learning is only valuable if it is linked to the core subjects. How schools have managed lockdown and the return to school will be a significant factor in their future relationships with their communities. Schools where the response has been supportive will go from strength to strength.”

**Azita Zohhadi, Leadership in Education specialist, former head of Nelson Mandela School, Birmingham**





**WHAT THE DURHAM  
COMMISSION WILL DO**

We stand by all our recommendations from the first report. However, a number of them require us to develop relationships with policy makers and across sectors that are preoccupied with the impact of Covid-19. We will continue our conversations and advocate for the adoption of all our recommendations over the long term.

For the next three years we will focus on the six recommendations that will address the urgent needs of schools and young people, during and post Covid-19.

### **1. Teaching and creativity through system leadership and collaboration**

We proposed a national network of Creativity Collaboratives to model school-led development underpinned by teaching for creativity, explicitly using pedagogies and practices that cultivate creativity in young people.

Arts Council England will manage the programme. Applications for the pilot will open in May 2021, with activity commencing in October 2021 and running until July 2024. The pilot will support a minimum of eight school clusters nationally, each working with at least a further eight schools. The programme will target children who are experiencing the most societal disadvantage and the impact will be spread more widely across other schools by sharing the work of the Collaboratives through the Creativity Exchange (see below) and online events.

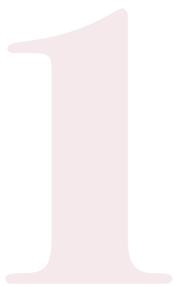
The Collaboratives will work alongside school networks and respond to school and community needs at a local level. Teachers will devise relevant creative strategies and pedagogies, test out approaches and evaluate impact on their pupils, schools and communities.

The programme will aim to develop teachers who take a confident, collaborative approach to designing and implementing a curriculum that nurtures the creativity of young people across all subjects.

The programme will be evaluated to build a national overview of the impact and value of structures and pedagogies that promote teaching for creativity. This will be shared with Arts Council stakeholders and partners, the education sector and with Government.

In addition, this January the Arts Council launched The Creativity Exchange on behalf of the Commission, a growing online space which connects teachers with one another and with practice-based resources supporting teaching for creativity. The site hosts webinars, provocations and blogs and will include resources and thoughts on leadership, culture, pedagogies and practices, student roles, assessment and partnerships which support teaching for creativity.

<https://www.creativityexchange.org.uk/>



## 2

### 2. Digital technologies, creativity and education

We recommended that the education system should better support young people to engage creatively and critically with the digital technology that has become a significant part of their everyday lives. In particular we asked that the Department for Education (DfE) should seek additional funding for training for teachers in digital literacy and digital creativity, with time and resources committed to it. This is now even more vital.

The events of the last year have made digital skills essential to education, home life and work. They are not optional for young people. Through the Creativity Collaboratives and Creativity Exchange, Arts Council England, working with the Commission and its Advisory Board, will pilot approaches and pedagogies that develop the creative and critical use of digital skills. The Arts Council will also be looking for partnerships across government, business, technology and the education sectors through which we can support young people to be proactive, critical and creative users of the technologies that are reshaping their world.

## 3

### 3. Creativity and the arts in schools

We recommended that arts and culture should be an essential part of the education of every child. Our research and interviews for this report show that young people have been affected by the loss of collective arts and cultural events. School leaders believe these activities will be vital in restoring the wellbeing of pupils and a school culture that promotes excellence. This should be an opportunity to ensure that all young people can experience the happiness that cultural events can bring, not only as a remedial measure, but throughout school life.

In the immediate future, Arts Council England will work with schools and partners to ensure arts and cultural activities are recognised as core to, and integrated fully into a 'recovery curriculum' which inspires and re-engages children with learning as they return to school. The mounting evidence of the long-term impact of the pandemic on children's mental health, as well as educational attainment, means that opportunities for developing curiosity, self-expression and joy through a rich curriculum should sit alongside initiatives to fill gaps in knowledge as a result of school closures. The Arts Council is working to evolve the Artsmark programme to reflect and deliver on the findings of the Durham Commission and the objectives in the new 10-year strategy, *Let's Create*.

Over the longer term, the Arts Council will continue to recommend the establishment of a National Plan for Cultural Education that includes art and design, dance, drama and music, providing opportunities during the school day for children to engage with a range of cultural activities. Arts Council England will also work with DfE and the national network of Music Education Hubs to ensure a joined up, quality music education for all children across the country, both in and out of school.

This work with schools will be integrated into the delivery plans for the Arts Council's new 10-year strategy, *Let's Create*, ensuring a firm commitment to do more for children and young people and to support their individual creativity.

## 4

**4. Creative beginnings: pre-school and the early years curriculum**

We recommended that the purpose and place of creativity and teaching for creativity should be recognised and encouraged in the early years (0-4). The pandemic has absorbed the attention of policy makers and researchers over the past year and we have made less progress with this recommendation than we intended. However, early years remain a high priority for the Commission.

To achieve our goals, the Commission will liaise with the DfE Early Years team and other partners including Nesta and the National Lottery Community Fund, working with pre-school children and their families, to develop approaches which recognise the importance of early years creativity in laying the foundation for the best possible start to young people's lives.

The Arts Council will continue to work with the Talent 25 programme and the research team at De Montfort University in Leicester in a longitudinal action research programme (over 25 years) to understand the value and impact of sustained engagement with creative activities starting from birth <https://talent25.org.uk/>.

## 5

**5. Creative opportunities and out-of-school hours**

The Commission recommended that in-school opportunities to develop creativity should be complemented by diverse routes to take part in creative activities outside of school hours. Activity outside of schools has also been affected by the pandemic. We believe that along with recommendation 3, this should be urgently addressed by the development of a nationwide 'recovery curriculum' and by a programme of cultural and creative activities that will run both inside and outside of school hours and across weekends and holidays.

During lockdown the Arts Council responded by delivering over 40,000 *Let's Create* packs containing accessible creative activities to children and families across the country. Working with Bridge organisations, local charities, schools and food banks, the Arts Council made sure that the *Let's Create* packs reached the children who needed them most.

The Arts Council also partnered with Google Arts to showcase the digital content that young people were producing during lockdown. Both activities demonstrated the wishes of young people to express themselves through creative activities, to stay connected to each other and to understand what was happening in the world outside.

Working through the Arts Council's place-based approach to the delivery of *Let's Create*, we will strengthen cultural and creative relationships for young people across their communities, realising opportunities for them to explore their creative potential. We will work with the existing network of Local Cultural Education Partnerships to build capacity in communities, ensuring provision is aligned to the needs of young people in the places in which they live. We continue to believe that resources should be found to grow the existing national network of Saturday Clubs, which have been highly successful in the field of art and design and have been developing in other disciplines such as science and engineering, fashion and business, and writing and talking.

## 6

## 6. Beyond school: creative opportunities and experiences in the world of work

We recommended that young people should be better prepared for the changing world of work. They need the creative capacities that employers are looking for, which will enable them to be resilient and adaptable, to pursue portfolio careers and engage in lifelong learning. Qualification frameworks should reflect the value of creativity for the current and future workforce.

The way we work has now changed. Digital platforms and remote working and collaboration will continue to grow in significance. The WEF predictions show that the adoption of technology will both increase the pace of automation and the opportunities for skilled workers with creative competencies.

We recommended that The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education should review the current opportunities for developing creativity and creative thinking as key capacities in emerging T level qualifications and existing Apprenticeship Standards. This work has demonstrated employer demand for creativity, knowledge, skills and behaviours across all employment sectors. The Arts Council will continue to work with employers' groups, to ensure creativity is recognised within industry-led qualifications and frameworks. We will work with the new National Skills Fund pilots to understand how a school's curriculum can support the needs of local industries.

In addition, we want to highlight opportunities offered in growth areas such as the creative industries, software development and biotech, which require creative competencies and cross-curriculum thinking. These growth areas often have a strong geographical concentration but can also be addressed by self-employment, freelance and entrepreneurship. We want to make sure talent pathways are open to all, whichever route to employment a young person chooses, and will support the integration of creative capacities in the education system.

### Conclusion

Since the original Commission report, the effect of Covid-19 has often been to bring the best out of people while magnifying the inequities they experience day to day. This has been as true for young people as for adults. In responding to the pandemic we have seen great creativity, and a great leap forward in how technology can help us liberate and apply that creativity, and we have also seen how that is not available to everyone. Schools, their leaders and their staff, have risen to the occasion, affirming their civic role and supporting children, families and their broader communities.

Events have underlined the validity of the original Commission recommendations; these will be adapted and prioritised for the changed environment. In the long term, we expect that the ways in which we teach our children and the ways children learn will shift to reflect changed social

and economic realities and the need for creative capacities. The curriculum will have to include a blend of knowledge, capabilities and behaviours that equip young people better for school, work and community. The Commission Advisory Board and the Arts Council, working with Durham University and other partners, will focus on these six recommendations to help chart a way forward.





# ANNEXE 1

## OUR RESEARCH

Our original Commission recommendations drew on a literature review by the Durham University research team, one-to-one interviews with school leaders and heads of departments, teachers and policy makers.

This annexe summarises a more recent literature review and our conversations with senior leaders, teachers in schools and young people, who recount their first-hand experiences of working in education during the pandemic and their perspective on the changing role of schools and education. This work has informed the prioritisation of our future work into the six recommendations below to ensure we support schools to embed teaching for creativity.

- Establishment of the national Creativity Collaboratives programme and the Creativity Exchange online platform
- Investment in creative digital skills
- Embed creativity and arts in schools focusing initially through integration into a ‘recovery curriculum’
- Support for early years creativity
- Development of out-of-school opportunities
- Beyond school – identification of creative opportunities and the world of work

### **A. The Durham Commission Literature Review: Impact of Covid-19 on Education**

The review was undertaken by Durham research team and considered the impact of Covid-19 on education, young people (including mental health), educators, families and employers, using the data sources below:

- Peer reviewed articles and reports, journal articles, conference papers published March 2020 to November 2020
- Academic research, sector surveys, Select Committee minutes, Ofsted and Children’s Commissioner reports

It posed three research questions:

1. In what ways has Covid-19 impacted on the education environment and schooling context for children and young people between the ages of four and 18 in England?
2. What does current research tell us about the educational priorities of education leaders (including policy makers and school leaders) since March 2020?
3. How have these changes impacted on factors which are important for fostering creativity and creative thinking, and on schools’ and other organisations’ ability to ‘teach for creativity’?

## Findings

The Literature Review gave us a picture of the stresses on the education system before, during and after lockdown, during which most of schools' activities were delivered remotely.

The context was complex. As Ofsted noted, the lack of clarity on government guidance, staff absence, managing testing and isolation, exam preparation, relationships and communications with parents presented significant challenges for school leadership (HM Ofsted, 2020-21), which must adapt to be 'collaborative, creative and responsive' (Harris & Jones, 2020).

Despite the fluid situation, parents were generally positive about schools during the March to July closures, with 61 per cent of parents with children at home indicating they were satisfied, and 65 per cent of those with children in school (keyworker children) (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020).

Three key themes emerged from the Literature Review:

### 1. The impact was shaped by and reflected pre-existing inequality

#### a) Access

Access to online resources and internet-enabled devices was a key measurable in research. The results showed how pre-existing inequality was transferred online. This highlighted gaps in resources and learning experiences, including those for creativity.

The report from the Children's Commissioner (2020) presented findings from Ofcom, estimating that between 1.14 million and 1.78 million children in the UK have no access at home to a laptop, desktop or tablet. In these families there is often a reliance on smartphones to access the internet, which is extremely challenging for completing and submitting schoolwork. Sixty-thousand 11- to 18-year-old children in the UK are estimated to have no home internet access at all. The study by Sharp et al (2020-1) found that 28 per cent of students had limited access to IT at home.

In schools in the most deprived areas, 15 per cent of teachers reported that more than one third of their students would not have adequate access to an electronic device for home learning (Cullinane and Montacute, 2020). This compared to 2 per cent from teachers in the most affluent state schools. In the same report, 12 per cent of teachers in the most deprived schools also reported that they considered that a third of their students would not have adequate internet access.

The government laptop scheme was announced in April 2020, with 200,000 devices and 50,000 routers made available to children with social workers, care leavers and disadvantaged year 10 students. However, it was estimated that there are 540,000 children in these eligible groups (Children's Commissioner, 2020).

## b) Remote teaching methods

Whether or not schools already had an online platform in place to receive work varied according to income, with 60 per cent of private schools and 37 per cent of state schools in the most affluent areas already having an online platform in place, compared to 23 per cent of the most deprived schools (Cullinane and Montacute, 2020).

The report by Cullinane and Montacute (2020), found that just 23 per cent of students reported taking part in live and recorded lessons online every day. In their report, Eivers et al (2020) found that just over half of all students taught remotely did not usually have live or real time lessons online, despite studies reporting that the use of online conversations had a 5 per cent higher level of student engagement (Lucas et al, 2020).

In addition, the study by Sharp et al (2020-21) found that only 5 per cent of teachers reported using remote lessons which involved students collaborating together and only 12 per cent of teachers reported interactive sessions between students and teachers.

Despite the pre-existing evidence on the importance of interactive learning, by July 2020 there was no evidence of an increase in the provision of interactive teaching and learning being used by teachers (Sharp et al, 2020-1; Nelson & Sharp, 2020).

Students from middle class homes reported being much more likely to take part in live and recorded lessons online each day than working class pupils (30 per cent vs 16 per cent respectively) (Cullinane and Montacute, 2020). The same report also found that students at private schools reported being more than twice as likely as their state school counterparts to have accessed online lessons every day (51 per cent of students in private primary schools and 57 per cent of students in private secondary schools).

The report by Cullinane and Montacute (2020) estimated that 45 per cent of students overall had communicated with their teachers in the previous week. However, this figure was significantly higher in independent schools at 62 per cent in primary schools and 81 per cent for secondary schools.

Lucas et al (2020) reported a 13 per cent lower level of pupil engagement for pupils with the highest level of deprivation, compared to those in the middle quintile.

Within schools, contact between pupils and teachers reduced significantly. Logistics changed to reduce contact and sharing of materials between staff and older students, and three quarters of teachers reported not feeling able to teach to their usual standard due to the restrictions on social distancing (Sharp et al, 2020-21).

While access to remote learning and quality of that learning for young people depended largely on their socio-economic situation, parents from the lowest-income families spent the most time supporting their child with their school work, with parental education being largely unrelated to the time parents

spent helping their children with school work. Parental engagement was higher among parents with primary age children (56 per cent) (Eivers et al, 2020).

## **2. Successful remote learning required more creative approaches and pedagogies**

Engagement was found to be dependent upon the style of teaching and activities set. The use of online conversations to deliver learning content as part of a wider range of measures showed a 5 per cent increase in student engagement, increasing the number of highly engaged disadvantaged students by 8 per cent. The use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) to inform pupils about learning activities showed an 8 per cent higher level of student engagement than schools not using a VLE. Disadvantaged students showed a 13 per cent increase in those who were highly engaged from the use of a VLE. Where less attention was given to all areas of the curriculum, student engagement was 6 per cent lower than where the teachers covered the curriculum as normal. The report by Lucas et al (2020) found that the most deprived schools struggled the most to be able to cover the curriculum. Where activities involved consolidating previous learning or revising, students showed a 5 per cent higher level of engagement, with disadvantaged students showing a 6 per cent increase in those who were highly engaged (Lucas et al, 2020).

Lockdown has increased family engagement in their children's learning and the distinction between home and education environments has become more fundamentally linked, particularly for primary aged children (Bridge England Network, 2020; Millard and McIntosh, 2020).

The arts were noted as being particularly popular for home learning. In addition, schools building stronger links with parents and community groups to support families, young people and children is highlighted as a necessity by Harris and Jones (2020)

## **3. The role for creativity in a 'recovery curriculum'**

Following the prolonged school closures between March and July 2020, the government proposals for a catch-up curriculum from September 2020 stated that schools should 'teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content' and that they should prioritise 'the most important components for progression' (Department for Education, 2020).

Despite the public emphasis on catching up academically, Ofsted reported, based on their pilot visits in September 2020, that they had observed a mixed interpretation of what was meant by a recovery curriculum (HM Ofsted, 2020-21). In some cases, schools were focusing on lost learning (particularly reading) and special educational needs (SEN) and had a stronger focus on personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and wellbeing. The visits found that some schools had achieved alignment between remote learning and the curriculum, however, others had not achieved alignment yet.

When surveyed, school leaders' top priorities for September 2020 were to provide support for students' emotional and mental health and wellbeing (81 per cent), re-engage students with learning (64 per cent) and settle students back into school (63 per cent) (Sharp et al, 2020-21).

The mental health of young people was a particular concern. Multiple reports presented findings about the impact of school closures and lockdown on the mental health of students (Children's Commissioner, 2020; HM Ofsted, 2020-21; Wilson, 2020; CircusWorks, 2020). Areas of mental health impacted included: a decrease in students' resilience (eg poor concentration span and fatigue); an increase in anxiety; missing friends; loneliness caused by social distancing and separation; boredom; hyperactivity; isolation; stress; and frustration.

Concern over the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable students was raised across multiple reports. Teachers were particularly concerned about a lack of support from other agencies, in addition to the education and welfare of their vulnerable students (Nelson and Sharp, 2020). The wider role of schools beyond teaching and learning was highlighted. Schools provide a safe space for vulnerable children, provide positive role models and encourage secure relationships. The importance of strengthening home school relationships with vulnerable families at this time was encouraged (Wilson, 2020).

Making arrangements for the return of extra-curricular activities has not been a priority within schools, with headteachers and senior leaders focusing on making their schools Covid-safe (Bridge England Network, 2020). The loss of extra-curricular support may mean that schools are struggling to include opportunities for creativity.

Where schools have been able to teach a broad range of the curriculum, student engagement was found to be higher (Lucas et al, 2020). Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, several reports showed that some schools are managing to continue arts provision and creativity in teaching and learning.

Developing plans which include teaching for creativity is an approach which could support both curriculum learning and the health and wellbeing of students. Schools have highlighted that support would be useful to do this, eg through partnerships working with cultural

organisations and practitioners alongside curated creative learning resources (Bridge England Network, 2020).

However, there are likely to be challenges to conventional collective creative activities for some time. In the study by Sharp et al (2020-22), 96 per cent of senior leaders reported that frequent cleaning and regular handwashing/sanitising (94 per cent) were necessary/essential for opening their schools for more students. Due to the cleaning procedures that would be required, the use of school settings for out-of-school music centres/ensembles was considered to be less feasible at the present time (Arts Council England, 2020).

### **B. Filling out the picture: The leaders' perspectives**

“ Learning through lockdowns has forced us to look beyond the ‘easy’ ways to nurture creativity by exploring how to develop our students’ resilience, ability to problem-solve, anticipate obstacles, see alternative views, think creatively for their studies and for their personal development. We have also been given a terrific opportunity to champion young people’s use of technology for good purposes, not just the concerning destructive ones we hear so much about.”

**Kat Pugh, Headteacher, St Marylebone CE School, London (a secondary school for girls with a mixed sixth form)**

The Literature Review revealed a disparate picture of schools’ and students’ experience of Covid and lockdown. However, it was clear that Covid-19 has highlighted and reinforced inequities. Those who already enjoy economic and educational advantages have been better resourced to deal with the experience.

With respect to cultural and creative activities and teaching for creativity, the Literature Review highlighted how the situation has reduced opportunities and access. However, the review also suggested that schools and pupils were creative in the way that they had adapted to the situation. Moreover, although creativity might be squeezed by the physical restraints in schools and the pressures of catch up, school leaders thought it was crucial to address the wellbeing of pupils and re-establish the supportive culture of their schools – although this might in practice depend on the kinds of collective and individual creative activities that were simultaneously hardest to pursue.

To better understand the picture, we formed an Educational Leadership Group (ELG) which included heads, deputy heads, heads of departments and CEOs of academy trusts and educational services. The group encompassed primary, secondary, comprehensive SEN and academy schools and ranged geographically from rural Devon via south London to Cumbria.

Through extensive surveys and interviews with the ELG, we explored how creativity was experienced and taught within their schools before and after the arrival of Covid-19.

Some were already familiar with the definitions of creativity within the first Durham report (see Annexe 3). All shared with us a broad and dynamic vision of what creativity meant in practice within their schools and in the lives of their students.

Their perspectives shared common themes, set out below, which supported the original Commission findings on the contribution of creativity to our lives, and how it influences wellbeing, social engagement, community identity and social mobility.

### 1. Creativity in the civic role of the school

As a consequence of Covid-19, leaders felt that the civic value of schools had gained wide appreciation among parents. Interviewees talked about the role schools played in feeding communities and keeping track of and supporting vulnerable children and their families. In turn, families had the chance to experience the challenges of home learning, looking after their children full time and developing a deeper understanding of what education is. They were able to see that schools are creative and proactive institutions that develop the whole person and help to find practical solutions to real problems in the world. There are now stronger links between schools and families. In addition, the loss of the arts and cultural aspects of school life have been acutely felt across communities.

“There’s definitely been a renewed valuing of a lot of what schools do and offer, in a range of ways to do with socialisation, social development, wellbeing and physical and mental health and culture. I think the breadth of what a school is and does has become more evident to parents. Schools’ pastoral and communal work has reminded people that schools are civic institutions central to community life.”

**Sir Jon Coles, CEO United Learning (a multi-academy trust)**

“We see creativity as having a vital civic aspect. It’s brought the wider stakeholders closer together – working with local care homes, working with a local charity called Drugslink that addresses addiction. Parents see these relationships and the encouragement that schools can give their children to participate more widely in society. While the area is quite affluent, not all parents share the same belief in the value of education, so we have to show it has a social value. We are trying to make students creative so they can be successful in all aspects of life, not only academically, not just economically, but in terms of being better people.”

**James Tubb, Assistant Headteacher, Kings Langley School, Hertfordshire (a co-educational secondary school)**

“The lockdown has made many parents more appreciative of what we do day in and day out. Many children have had no-one to talk to during lockdown. They disclose things to us as often they have no other outlet...Before feeding free school meals, students hit the national press we gave out food bank vouchers (and continue to do so) and deliver carrier bags of food. We provide shoes for the kids when we see they are falling apart, we buy uniform, equipment, school bags (never mind the ICT requirements for remote learning). We do this all the time. I hope that parents and the social care system have realised that schools do more than educate. During this third lockdown we are scrabbling for every bid we can to ensure that our students have access to remote learning and the data required to support it.”

**Emma Aubrey, Headteacher, Dowdales School, Dalton, Cumbria (a co-educational 11-16 local authority school)**

“I think a lot of parents appreciated, for the first time in a secondary school context, what teachers actually do. And children missed having contact with adults at school who have an unconditional positive regard for them. Being with adults like that all day every day is something we don't give much credit, but an educational community has tremendous benefits.”

**Jon Nicholls, Director of Arts and Creativity, Thomas Tallis School, Blackheath, London (mixed comprehensive school for 11-19)**

“In the first lockdown, it became startlingly clear to people outside schools how much schools do and hold and manage. This was evident in the explosion of asks, communication, demands, needs to collect information, seek answers, requests for guidance. It exposed the lack of sufficient welfare services to support young people, such as social work, SEN provision, family services – schools by default have picked up so much of this work. Schools fulfil roles that, arguably, should be taken on by other state agencies. School staff know this – but it felt as if lockdown and all associated with it brought this to light for the rest of society.”

**Kat Pugh, Headteacher, St Marylebone CE School, London (a secondary school for girls with a mixed sixth form)**

## 2. Creativity in values

Education leaders we spoke with considered that the civic and community aspect of a school draws on the ethical and moral values of its culture, which is shaped by the creative elements they encourage within and alongside the curriculum. Education leaders reflected on how academic ‘catch-up’ pressures may prove a challenge to the holistic nature of a successful school culture. They were reluctant to separate out the academic thread of a school’s excellence from its broader values, and cram knowledge without context – although they understood parental anxiety about exam results. The overwhelming view was that contributing to the evolution of a happy, confident well-adjusted young person with a grasp of the world is a better aim than pursuing exam results in isolation, and that the former enables the latter. Given the crisis in young people’s mental health, which has been exacerbated by isolation and fear during the pandemic, many leaders

wanted to prioritise re-establishing a creative, happy collaborative culture in school. But they all experienced pressures on resources and budget for ‘bubbling’ and cleaning, a shortage of physical space, and great demands on staff.

“Our focus as a school is on building on the core values that we share, ensuring equity, building community, securing communication and celebrating diversity. This has helped us pull together. We were worried to hear that gangs were becoming more active in the area over the past few months, through county lines, but we’ve not had the issue coming into school and we feel that’s because we’ve continued to say, ‘this is who we are.’ We have tried not to listen to all the ‘noise’ going on and maintain our core values. Communication has been vital; we speak to every single family in the school. Those collective values are the thing that has driven us through.”

**Lucy Tasker, Assistant Headteacher, Falinge Park High School, Rochdale (11-16 mixed comprehensive)**

“We celebrate the arts and creativity as part of how we promote the importance of building character; they are the vehicle for the questions we pose to young people about who they are and the ethical framework by which they live; and to inspire a love of learning, of exploration. In turn these build the collective memory and cultural DNA of a school. Through an excessive focus on ‘catch up’, if we are not careful we can get caught creating a very reductionist view of education.”

**Jonathan Culpin, CEO, Anglian Learning (a multi-academy trust based in East Anglia)**

“You can’t know for certain that a creative pedagogy is working – you can’t measure it precisely because creativity is context specific and many factors can impact on someone’s creative development over time. So you have to have a system of values and ethics about how you educate young people that informs your decision making. It’s about values and not about ‘what works.’ You want your education system to be good enough for everybody and you want it to be morally and ethically good. You can have an excellent education system that isn’t good. We pride ourselves that we try to make ethical decisions, not just convenient ones.”

**Jon Nicholls, Director of Arts and Creativity, Thomas Tallis School, Blackheath, London (mixed comprehensive school for 11-19)**

“The school culture is vital. If children aren’t okay, no amount of academic work or revision sessions will make them be able to do an exam. We were one of the worst hit areas with Covid. A lot of the kids’ parents are key workers – in defence, in hospitals, in care homes. Children were left on their own, technology allowing them to talk on their phones in their bedrooms to each other. The children left us confident students and a lot of them have come back as shadows of their former selves. I need to get them back to where they

were before we can catch up academically. They don't know how to be themselves and interact with others. So we are looking at what activities we can do at lunchtime that will get them interacting with each other, playing board games or ball games with each other within their bubble. I am thinking all the time about how to bring the joy back to the classroom. The creativity and arts subjects we do here encourage them to know who they are. Unless we can sort that out they aren't going to make progress academically.”

**Emma Aubrey, Headteacher, Dowdales School, Dalton, Cumbria (a co-educational 11-16 local authority school)**

“ I believe Covid has made people more aware of the importance of friends and families. Issues regarding race and culture have also come to the forefront – why are some ethnicities more vulnerable than others? Is this to do with social injustice? Black Lives Matter also feeds into this. Education needs to work harder at celebrating identity without an over emphasis on British values. Identity is such an important aspect that can define our response to the world around us. We can have a strong identity which leads to positive outcomes – I am important, I can be whatever I set my mind to. Equally someone might have a strong identity that limits their opportunities – I am worthless, I do not add value, I do not belong, I cannot be...Education needs to prioritise the development of identity. Why is it one of the first topics children have in the Early Years curriculum is ‘all about me and my family’? This is rarely revisited. Instead we learn about Tutankhamun's family, Queen Victoria's family, Guy Fawkes.”

**Azita Zohhadi, Leadership in Education specialist, former head of Nelson Mandela School, Birmingham**

### 3. Creativity and technology

While there were positive creative experiences that came from the shift to dependence on technology, especially within remote learning and online platforms, this change also emphasised the unique value of the live, collaborative shared school experience. In terms of preparedness, some schools were much better resourced than others. Some, such as the SEN school in the survey, were well advanced in terms of technology skills and already had online platforms. Leaders thought that the use of technology and associated skills had been adopted with remarkable speed, but that they were often trying to deliver conventional pedagogies across a digital medium, and that it was important that young people be taught how to use technology creatively rather than as a consumer medium. Inequities were a major factor. Some leaders faced socio-economic conditions where a digital offer could not be taken up by many families, who lacked any internet access. One general observation of the shift to technology was how it could enable better targeted learning and use of resources; there was a sense that this change could lead to more ‘blended’ approaches that could break down subject barriers and redefine the learning space. Leaders wanted more creative pedagogies tailored to technology; but tackling inequity in provision and access was seen as fundamental.

“I’d never heard of Zoom before. It was okay, but I’d much rather have the children in front of me in the class! We’ve rolled out Google Classroom, across all five schools in the trust. The children really like it and have taken to it for homework activities. Certain aspects of teaching and learning have become more creative. Children have had to be creative in their approaches to more ‘open-ended’ tasks that have been set through lockdown. Prior to the first lockdown we had begun to timetable ‘Learning in depth’ sessions on a regular basis, allowing children to tackle one project, on their own terms, over a lengthy period of time using key skills learnt in other parts of the curriculum.”

**Rob Norton, Headteacher, High Bickington Primary (a CE academy school)**

“We discovered about 30 per cent of our children didn’t have access to any IT or internet connection. We’ve previously been oblivious across education as to how little access many families have to the outside world. We’ve had children doing all their online learning with a phone, or they’ve shared a phone with the rest of the family with several kids at home. I’m grateful to now know that; I don’t think families or children were telling us about that. We’ve had a loan system for laptops. Government laptops didn’t come in the numbers promised so we ended up purchasing many ourselves. Where pupils do have access to adequate ICT or internet provision, there has been a real opening up of methods of delivery and engagement and pupils’ ability to access learning independently. There are opportunities for providing more individualised learning programmes. The downside is that active learning and collaborative learning methodologies are more difficult.”

**Lucy Tasker, Assistant Headteacher, Falinge Park High School, Rochdale (11-16 mixed comprehensive)**

“The majority of our children used their own mobile phone for remote work. They don’t have enough data to watch a live lesson. Imagine having to use that to access your lesson and find out what you have to do and so on. We got nine laptops from BAE [commercial company in Barrow-in-Furness], six from the government. But I didn’t get any internet or data I could give to kids. That was overlooked.”

**Emma Aubrey, Headteacher, Dowdales School, Dalton, Cumbria (a co-educational 11-16 local authority school)**

“With remote teaching and learning, schools have moved forward in terms of their confidence, knowledge and expertise at a speed driven by necessity. Changes that might have taken 10 or 15 years have come about in months. There are huge possibilities with the technology that we are now using to get large, diverse groups of people together from different parts of the country...Schools are trying things like virtual parents’ evenings and finding attendance has soared. In terms of pedagogies, it’s been a steep learning curve for many teachers – they’ve been using technology but coming to terms with that so they have been making small steps with how they teach. Live remote teaching has tended to be directive. What I would love to see is remote teaching and digital teaching allowing for break-out groups and remote discussions, more chat and feedback – that’s more complex to

do and requires a greater level of confidence. At the moment we are at the early stages and it's not as imaginative and creative as it might be in six months.”

**Rachel Macfarlane, Director of Education Services, Herts for Learning**

“We adapted our pedagogical approaches as much as we could, using Teams or Zoom and other online platforms. It was a challenge, but it was amazing how quickly staff picked up the technology. We were able to live stream learning. After we reopened we had to ensure we could do a blended approach to look after children who were still off. If we've got half a class isolating, and the other half still at school, we're setting up cameras within the classroom so everyone can still participate.”

**James Tubb, Assistant Headteacher, Kings Langley School, Hertfordshire (a co-educational secondary school)**

“We discovered from remote learning that students can do a lot without us telling them what to do all the time. You don't have to micromanage them towards a larger task – you can encourage greater independence and confidence and set them off towards a major task. Teaching students ways to innovate and learn independently at home via technology is important – but young people don't only suffer during lockdown if they cannot connect and learn online; many suffer because this was all they could do. They are missing the live interaction of being in school, creating and collaborating together both formally and informally.”

**Kat Pugh, Headteacher, St Marylebone CE School, London (a secondary school for girls with a mixed sixth form)**

“The gains that teachers have made with remote learning give us an opportunity to tap more into technology. Twelve months ago, apart from a relatively few number of innovators, teachers would never have used Zoom or its equivalents. Technology is not the whole answer. It is a tool. But thinking about how we can stimulate more collaboration between pupils and teachers with this technology opens up fresh opportunities, for transforming the learning process. It needs to be taken up by heads, by trust leaders and by Ofsted. We have to think how we can help young people turn their daily transactional relationships with digital technologies into those that can breakdown the traditional divide between home and school, and from a model of learning done to you to something closer to a true partnership.”

**Jonathan Culpin, CEO, Anglian Learning (a multi academy trust based in East Anglia)**

#### 4. Creativity and skills.

Rapid changes in the outlook for the world of work during the last year have focussed educational leaders on the mindset and skills that young people may need in a world in which they will need to use more technology, won't necessarily enjoy peer-to-peer skills development in an office or company, will have to be more adaptable, and may even face battles with long-term unemployment.

Creativity and teaching for creativity were seen as vital aspects of preparing young people for this changed world of work, through encouraging critical thinking, insight, personal resilience, confidence and collaboration. However, educational leaders valued creativity equally for personal welfare and self-esteem and sheer happiness as well as its more instrumental aspects.

“I think the current situation bears out that we are teaching ‘traditional’ skills, knowledge, concepts and methodology for a future we cannot predict. We need to have a greater emphasis on teaching skills that are multi-functional and interchangeable for a wide range of futures and job opportunities. A purely knowledge-based approach is too narrow for that. We want to angle the children towards being collaborative and resilient and able to notice and think for themselves in all their learning. In history, for example, they should be able to make deductions from evidence and say when evidence is a primary source or a secondary one and think about the motivations of the person who’s painted the picture or taken the photograph or written the account. That is just as important as understanding what a fronted adverbial is.”

**Rob Norton Headteacher, High Bickington Primary (a CE academy school)**

“The exclusively ethical approach to creativity is quite a middle-class view – and I can criticise myself for this. We held a competition for the pupils to come up with a motto for learning, and they came up with “the more you learn, the more you earn.” It was a wake up for us! It’s a deprived area. As teachers we may want to hear some esoteric understanding of creativity, but these young people want the skills to thrive and survive. Of course we encourage ethics and values through creativity. But young people are interested in how creativity can help them earn enough money to live.”

**Lucy Tasker, Assistant headteacher, Falinge Park High School, Rochdale (11-16 mixed comprehensive)**

“I think the furore over the exam algorithm woke parents up to the unfairness of the exam system. There are very few areas of life in which we would tolerate a ‘failure’ rate of 30 per cent year in, year out as we do with GCSEs – if a hospital said a third of admissions that came into our hospital didn’t make it there would be an uproar. And yet, we insist that we have a good exam system, that every year consigns a third of our young people to failure. Those in the current education system are going to have a much more turbulent work and social life than their predecessors – think how many career changes an undergraduate is now likely to have. We need to embrace that and think how we can teach people creatively and adaptably and see that as exciting and healthy instead of retreating from it as something that is challenging and scary.”

**Rachel Macfarlane, Director of Education Services, Herts for Learning**

“We have a knowledge rich curriculum; how can that work with creativity? I think of it in terms of propositional knowledge and procedural knowledge; the curriculum needs that blend and teaching for creativity allows that to work. In maths you need to have the propositional knowledge but in the current climate you need to apply that in a procedural way – we have, for example, major films studios locally – Leavesden, Pinewood, Elstree. These are big employers of our students, So it’s about how you teach them in a way that increase their employability after formal education.”

**James Tubb, Assistant Headteacher, Kings Langley School, Hertfordshire (a co-educational secondary school)**

“Over the years we’ve worked closely with employers – and in the Cambridge area working with the bio-sciences. One of the things we’re always asking is, what is the skill-set required of these young people? We wouldn’t dispute the value of creativity being good for your mental wellbeing and key social skills, but we also know from these conversations with employers that it is also a key passport to jobs, new pathways and new opportunities. And, in particular, the power of creativity to create divergent thinking which is so valued by our leading industries. However, our exam system does not easily capture such skills and attributes and the risk is that schooling, as we know it, becomes increasingly seen by young people and others as irrelevant, especially in the post-pandemic world.”

**Jonathan Culpin, CEO, Anglian Learning (a multi academy trust based in East Anglia)**

“Educating children for the unknown and being comfortable with uncertainty is a key value. We shouldn’t pretend that just working hard and doing your top button up is going to be enough. It’s not. The system is unfair. It’s not enough to just have the grades. Everyone’s got the grades. Kids need to be armed with that understanding.”

**Jon Nicholls, Director of Arts and Creativity, Thomas Tallis School, Blackheath, London (mixed comprehensive school for 11-19)**

“Schools are places where young people explore and learn – not necessarily with a specific measurable outcome or career or job in mind – but for the love of learning – which in itself develops them as thinkers, players, leaders, team-members, citizens. I have felt this acutely in the (twice now) cancellation of public exams and associated debate and discussion. The loss of exams is not about the grades but rather about the loss of the students’ journey up to and through the exams, knowing they revised, took responsibility, turned up, faced the blank sheet and the questions – and created those grades by doing so. What’s missing in all the coverage is this loss of an extraordinarily important, formative experience.”

**Kat Pugh, Headteacher, St Marylebone CE School, London (a secondary school for girls with a mixed sixth form)**

“I think having something that has always been there disrupted prompts creative thinking and problem solving. There has been some real ingenuity. Some children started businesses online during lock down or redesigned a parent’s restaurant business to become a takeaway. The visible application of skills learned in school has improved engagement and confidence for some of these pupils. There is a risk at the same time that when learning in school appears irrelevant to lived experience, young people will disengage. Things have definitely happened with respect to young people’s relationship with the world of work that schools need to acknowledge.”

**Lucy Tasker, Assistant headteacher, Falinge Park High School, Rochdale (11-16 mixed comprehensive)**

“I believe there needs to be a stronger emphasis on pedagogy and self-awareness: How do we learn? How can we adapt our learning styles and patterns? How can we develop strategies so that we have the tools to learn in a range of situations? We need to make stronger links with knowledge and the development of skills with values, purpose, rationale and context. There needs to be a greater flow between subjects. Covid has shown the importance of needing to better understand yourself and how to be resilient in a range of situations. I think all children need to have a mental health and resilience pathway. This needs to be a requirement for all education settings.”

**Azita Zohhadi, Leadership in Education specialist, former head of Nelson Mandela School Birmingham**

## 5. Creativity through relationships with the cultural sector.

Interviewees had a strong sense of the value of the arts and cultural experiences in young lives and observed that participation in these was associated with happiness, better mental health, confidence and resilience. They hoped that current circumstances would provide the chance to reappraise and strengthen relationships with the cultural sector, through joint practice development, more use of shared space and high-quality digital offerings, despite the obstacles in terms of time and money.

“I’d like to see more JPD (joint practice development) with cultural organisations and other educators. The power of JPD is that it involves people. With CPD (continuing professional development), you might go back with a notebook of ideas and a lot of enthusiasm, but nothing ever comes from it. The power of JPD is that you see it playing out, and you’ve already tried the approach on a group of young people before you work with your own.”

**Abi Steady, Deputy Headteacher, Ashmount School, Loughborough (SEN school for pupils aged 4-19)**

“The cultural sector is in an even worse situation than educators – and one of the things they can do is to reach more proactively into schools. The challenge for schools is having someone who has the time to pick up the phone and do the networking and build the partnerships – it may seem counterintuitive for schools to invest in someone who does less teaching but now is the time for schools to be brave. State schools need their “old boys’ network” like that enjoyed by the private sector – there have been some brilliant initiatives to replicate that kind of networking, but none have received any permanent funding. The state sector needs a way to help connect the right people to the students with emerging talent – and that’s a national emergency now in the wake of Covid-19. 93 per cent of people are educated in state schools. That’s a lot of talent, a lot of future promise that needs to be properly nurtured. It shouldn’t be a postcode lottery.”

**Jon Nicholls, Director of Arts and Creativity, Thomas Tallis School, Blackheath, London (mixed comprehensive school for 11-19)**

“Stronger partnerships and more co-creation would be welcome but there are barriers to this happening as cultural organisations don’t have the capital or capacity to do outreach and schools don’t have the capital to pay for it or the capacity to engage. Offers that work and overcome these barriers are things like the National Theatre making available its archive of recordings of all productions ever recorded, for free, to schools. This was a great treasure during lockdown and continues to enhance our offer to students. I’ve recently also been really impressed by the way Reuters has recently made four days of speaker talks and panel discussions available for free – and the Financial Times which offers free access to teachers and 6th Formers.”

**Kat Pugh, Headteacher, St Marylebone CE School, London (a secondary school for girls with a mixed sixth form)**

“These kids having access to quality live theatre, like with the Old Vic or the RSC, is brilliant. And other cultural experiences too. Our year 7s had a live link with questions to an author the other week. So across all creative disciplines and platforms, let’s have that – let my kids talk to Dame Judy Dench! Let them be shown dance by our best dancers. Let’s do it. What if these kids could have access to watch a rehearsal? Wow. A high-quality rehearsal – and then talk to the director. That’s going to help them and inspire them to answer exam questions better than anything before.”

**Emma Aubrey, Headteacher, Dowdales School, Dalton, Cumbria (a co-educational 11-16 local authority school)**

In addition, interviewees offered many examples of creative pedagogies and approaches that they had used both before and since the impact of Covid-19. These, again, showed the wide variety of ways in which creativity is understood, experienced and taught in schools.

“ Lockdown gave us a chance to familiarise parents with some aspects of teaching practice they might have heard of but had never seen. Creative activities and creativity were central to what we sent home – our children aren’t working towards accreditation in the typical sense and many families may feel ill-equipped to deliver formal teaching programmes from home – so we used resources like the Sensory Atelier packs, that we are generating through a partnership with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Attenborough Arts Centre. We also use Surviving Through Story. This was initially formulated for the mainstream, but we are trying to adapt it for our young people. We’ve also been able to do music therapy online – going into people’s homes via Teams.”

**Abi Steady, Deputy Headteacher, Ashmount School, Loughborough (SEN school for pupils aged 4-19)**

“ On a yearly basis we do what we call the Big Read. The librarian picks a book, and every single subject has to contribute by incorporating that book, its content and context, into their teaching for the month the project runs. So we’ve done Harry Potter using maths, Harry Potter within geography. It brings the school community together. We also do things like incorporating STEM into every single subject within a fortnight twice a year, so every subject had to deliver a STEM-based lesson across that fortnight. We bring those together and students then respond to them in their own personal way, in an internal competition. These projects encourage every member of staff to think how they can deliver the curriculum creatively.”

**James Tubb, Assistant Headteacher, Kings Langley School, Hertfordshire (a co-educational secondary school)**

“ Our maths department employs quite different pedagogies to anything else. The head of maths teaches through folding paper! She teaches students how to think like mathematicians rather than just do maths. We have a similar approach with vocabulary, exploring words and the roots of words and decoding words so that we’re not just reading. We kept this work going through lockdown, looking at the roots of words like reconciliation and forgiveness and attaching them to historical events. That concept runs through a number of areas. The science department is for example doing a project on etymology and language in science – and suddenly I’m interested in science! This focus on exploring meaning in language is especially important given our demographic context. We want students to discover the ways things are constructed, built and formed. The development of critical thinking is important.”

**Lucy Tasker, Assistant headteacher, Falinge Park High School, Rochdale (11-16 mixed comprehensive)**

“ I’m an advocate of building learning power – in my previous roles as a head teacher we would advocate building learning power as much as imparting skills that were content-based. We encouraged teachers to use an enquiry-based model and to take the metacognitive approach, talking to learners about the learning process and what they were doing as teachers and why, and the relevance of habits and skills and behaviours they were teaching. We had a learning power framework that applied to all we did in terms of student

development. Creativity was a big part of that – wanting students to feel confident to make mistakes and learn through exploration and experimentation and to ensure the curriculum was rich and diverse and there was room for creative subjects and creativity within all subjects. In recent years we’ve had a polarisation in teaching practices between knowledge rich, directive approaches on the traditional side and more free, explorative self-regulated approaches on the progressive side. I’ve always felt that both have their place, and neither can succeed without the other.”

**Rachel Macfarlane, Director of Education Services, Herts for Learning**

“I think it’s getting more of an issue that children don’t speak, and they don’t listen well in school. I booked myself and some other members of staff onto a two-year oracy project. It’s fundamental that children have good oracy skills – to be confident, to be able to speak clearly, to speak in sentences and to make themselves heard, and to build on something that somebody else has said. If we don’t get those things right then reading is harder, writing is harder and problem solving in maths is harder. My belief is that children who go to private schools are more likely to be good orators and debaters and able to stand up and present well. Children who go to maintained schools don’t get those sort of skills.”

**Rob Norton, Headteacher, High Bickington Primary (a CE academy school)**

### **C. The experience of young people**

There has been considerable reporting on young people’s experiences of the last year, both before and since our own literature review. The impact on learning gaps, mental and physical health and the effects of technology will be studied for years to come.

For the immediate purposes of this report, we wanted some specific insights that might tell us how young people had experienced lockdown and how it may have changed their feelings about school, learning, creativity and their futures.

We commissioned research from Beatfreaks who held a mixture of WhatsApp focus groups and interviews with 20 young people aged 14-18. Participants were recruited to ensure geographic, ethnic and socio-economic diversity.

While this was limited in scope and constrained by social distancing, it captured a wide range of perspectives and complemented what we had learned from the literature review and our work with the Education Leadership Group.

In general terms, the responses were balanced about experiences during this period. While some interviewees were critical of their schools, there was also mature understanding about wider pressures and appreciation of teachers’ efforts. They were anxious about present safety and future prospects but showed creativity and determination in their responses to the situation.

There were 10 critical themes emerging from the responses we received:

## 1. They felt schools had generally tried to help them deal with the impacts of Covid-19

Most interviewees from the younger group scored schools only mid-range or slightly above for their efforts in equipping students to deal with Covid-19, but said they had tried their best, whether it was in terms of individual support or guidance on hygiene. (There was concern about safety in schools).

“We’ve kind of been thrown back into things with no support at all but I guess it’s not entirely their fault.” 16-year-old female, Nottingham

“Half of my school are off and too many teachers are off. So it’s hard for the school to cope with so many teachers absent.” 15-year-old female, Chesterfield

Within the older group, there were higher scores for the support school had given:

“They have really helped with lots of online lessons, not pressuring me, helping me now I’m in year 13. And just not pushing me too hard.” 18-year-old male, Leicester

“They helped me keep a routine as best as I could. They also gave me mental health support and study support to 9 – 4.” 17-year-old male, Cornwall

## 2. Their home environments and family were integral to the experience

Some had a lot of support from their families and parents as well as schools. But this was not always there, or sufficient:

“Many schools think that teaching students grounding techniques and meditation is absolutely enough, but I’ve seen it myself, people are clueless in difficult situations like family struggles.” 16-year-old female, Nottingham

Having siblings of different ages at home also made learning hard:

“My little brothers and sisters, they were having the times of their life.” 16-year-old female, Manchester

The older interviewees found the restrictions of lockdown and the family environment especially hard:

“I feel like my personality has changed to a certain extent and self-esteem and stuff like that. Now that I’m back in college I feel like I’m in a better place and I feel happier. You can only cope with your family for so long I feel like for me anyway.” 17-year-old male, Cornwall

“It really exasperated a lot of pre-existing issues in my family and was quite challenging as not only were all of the children at home but also my parents were too.” 17-year-old female, Bristol

### 3. They developed their relationship with technology further

While interviewees had all used technology to help them learn before Covid-19, they felt that it had since become integral to how they did their work. Some specific helpful platforms and programmes were mentioned, like Seneca learning and Quizlet. They liked approaches that broke down knowledge, presented it differently, showed how to answer questions and allowed more efficient use of time.

“We are reliant on devices to learn” 14-year-old male, Swindon

“I’m using (technology) a lot more but it’s helping me more” 15-year-old female, Birmingham

While we know there was great inequality in access to devices and the internet nationally, no-one in these conversations mentioned that they had been disadvantaged this way. There was only one comment about it at all:

“Although we haven’t seen it here, some families don’t have computers laptops etc.”

17-year-old male, Luton

### 4. They had varied perspectives on home learning and self-directed learning

Some had found it difficult to be organised, some enjoyed the more ‘relaxed’ and personal environment. Similarly, some enjoyed the sense of greater control over their learning; others were ambivalent, didn’t think they knew how to organise, and worked more slowly.

“I had more control about the way I revised and learned rather than the teachers just talking and everything going in one ear and coming out the other.” 15-year-old female, Birmingham

“My concentration and work ethic fell as it was hard finding the motivation to actually get work submitted” 15-year-old female, Sheffield

Older interviewees, while finding home harder to deal with, came across as enjoying the greater responsibility of self-directed learning more; it made them feel more adult.

“I love the extra flexibility, I’d much rather do a very long day two or three times a week than do a smaller amount of work every day.” 17-year-old male, Luton

“It was good as an adult to have more control over your education and life.”

18-year-old male, Leicester

## 5. They wanted more imagination and personal contact in online learning

“I think on the whole, our teachers, the main thing that they did was upload. They had their PowerPoints that we would have usually gone through in a lesson. It was quite literally like being in a classroom, except you’re at home and on your own. Being in school, your teacher’s right in front of you, it’s much easier for you to air concerns or ask a question. And then they’ll be able to straight away address whatever problem you’re having. It’s been much harder during lockdown to kind of air issues or ask questions.” 16-year-old male, London

When live stream teaching was available, cameras were often turned off for privacy reasons which removed another crucial element of contact:

“(Teaching) changed negatively because the teachers can’t see our attitudes.”  
14-year-old male, Swindon

“Some teachers are not nearly as tech-savvy as they need to be to provide a variety of lesson types.” 17-year-old male, Luton

In the older group, there were more examples of positive efforts by schools to retain contact:

“They were very useful. Re mental health our form tutors phoned us to check in on us and my new school, the one I’m currently at, are bridging the gap between GCSE and A level sessions. The most useful thing was my new 6th form setting up calls between us and our new head of 6th.” 17-year-old female, Bristol

## 6. They enjoyed online lessons that were linked to real events

“There was quite a lot of good lessons that the teacher set that I thought like, ‘This is really cool.’ When it was kind of an English task that was based on things that were actually happening in the world. It kind of made it more real in that you could see how what you were learning actually linked to things you do now at school.” 16-year-old female, Leeds

“One of the more boring teachers started a little quiz on current affairs on a Monday that was fun.”  
14-year-old male, Swindon

Some also had opportunities for shared approaches to discussions offered by technology:

“In creative writing we were able to do inter-year critical workshops over teams which was scary but nice. We all have to submit pieces to be discussed so we take it in turns. Over lockdown we had bridging lessons with our 6th form so it was scary in the sense that you had never met these people and they were criticising your work but nice in the sense that it felt really liberating to be working creatively again.” 17-year-old female, Bristol

## 7. They wanted more creativity in teaching generally

There were positive accounts of creativity in their schools before lockdown, and a sense of its wide application:

“School encourages you to be creative in two ways, like to be creative in art or cooking but also in making your life/school more fun. So basically in art or cooking they won’t give you any example but all they do is just make you use your imagination, but in the other way they speak to you address you like an adult, and also they encourage your thoughts and ideas which gives you more confidence.” 14-year-old male, South Staffordshire

However, some felt that approaches to creativity in their schools were contradictory and confused – creativity might, for example, be associated with exceptional ability, or pupils were encouraged to be creative, but were not shown what this meant.

“I think we’re kept inside a box. In order to be considered creative you have to be really intelligent/good at what you do for it to be considered if you get what I mean.” 15-year-old female, Sheffield

“They would tell us to be creative and think outside the box but never helped with it. They were focused on the core subjects like maths and English.” 16-year-old female, Manchester

Some felt that the place of arts and creativity in their teaching had been impacted by lockdown, and the pressures of catching up – which emphasised the value of the remaining creative opportunities.

“They didn’t really pay attention on creativity and got us to focus more on core lessons. All we get is mocks and revising and putting a lot of heavy weight on our shoulders and the only time I can get away from it is photography where the atmosphere and the people are supportive and understanding.” 15-year-old female, Chesterfield

When asked how teachers might be more creative, the interviewees offered suggestions that ranged from the general – ‘making learning fun’, ‘sing our lessons’ and ‘not boring us to death’ – to specific ideas to ‘find better ways to ingrain the info’ such as using more puzzles and games, having polls on questions, more autonomy with the means of study, and making teaching relevant to life and life skills.

“I think they need to make lessons more enjoyable even if it is doing a silly dance or putting on a silly voice or whatever, it engages the students into wanting to listen.”

15-year-old female, Chesterfield



## 8. They were concerned about their mental health

Mental health emerged as a concern which had been magnified by lockdown. In their conversations, this was bound up with discussions about the need for contact, with schools and with their friends and peers, and the importance of personal and shared activities, including cultural and creative activities.

“I think (school) supported us well with the academic timings of everything. And things like cooking your own food and doing exercise. But I don’t think there was quite a big enough push on kind of keeping your mental health well. I think there could have been more contact by email just saying like, ‘We’re here if you need it’, and things like that. Just to get in touch really.”

16-year-old female, Leeds

For some, the disruption and loneliness were profoundly distressing:

“It basically had an impact on mental health because you didn’t know that you were coming out of it. I was just about to do an apprenticeship, and then basically, that got stuck because of Covid. And then I had to leave my college because of that and then everything was shut down. So I couldn’t do work from home at the time because I didn’t set everything up. And it was just a nightmare. More funding should be put into mental health and the education sector because it’s appalling to be honest as far as I am concerned.”

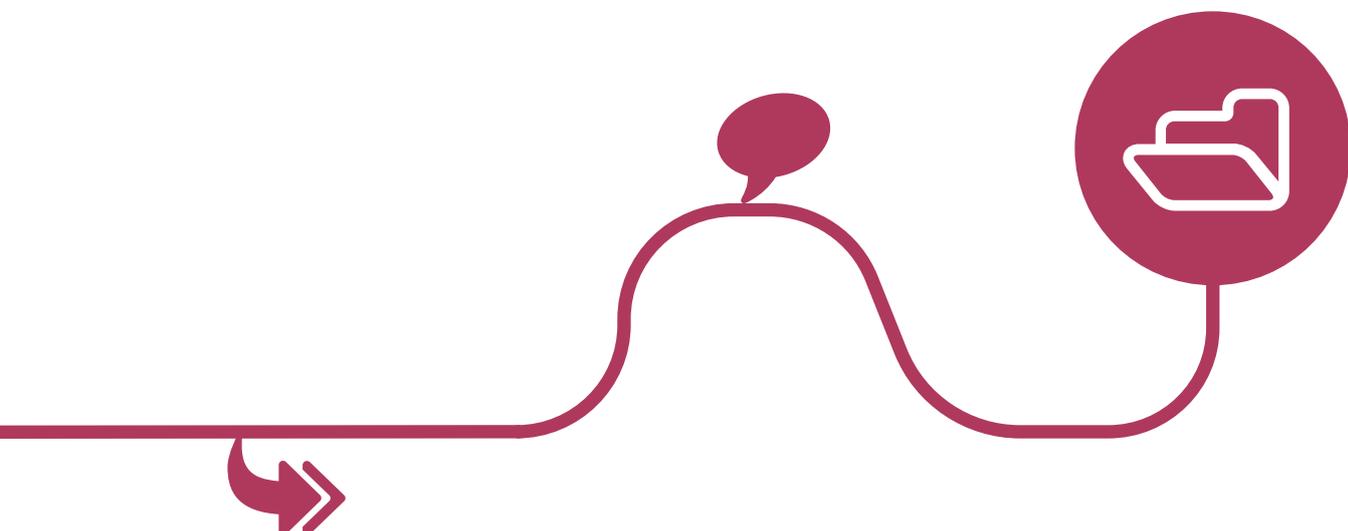
17-year-old male, Tamworth

Later, they felt mental health issues had been exacerbated by catch-up pressures, especially when catch-up teaching was delivered online.

“I think we need way more help understanding mental health in schools and what’s happening now with colleges as I believe we’ve been thrown in the deep end with little to no support.

It’s also hard to catch up with lessons however they’re uploading them online”

15-year-old female, Sheffield



## 9. They felt personal creativity and the use of technology had helped them stay positive

During the first lockdown many interviewees had started new hobbies or learned creative skills. Along with the national pursuit of baking they also described how they had exercised, read, played golf, produced music, written songs and painted, learned audition pieces or even started online businesses.

“I had several hobbies ranging from learning how to do my own nails to researching witchcraft!”  
15-year-old female, Sheffield

“I dipped my toes into character design. I’m now working on a mod for a game I quite like, to add a custom character to its roster!” 16-year-old female, Nottingham

Technology was crucial to how they had negotiated lockdown personally:

“It’s pretty much the only reason I’m still functioning mentally” 16-year-old female, Nottingham

“100 per cent it occupied me for hours and helped me in ways that I didn’t think it would”  
15-year-old female, Chesterfield

“The internet was a massive help with this as without it I don’t know what I’d do.”  
15-year-old female, Sheffield

“Of course I don’t know what I would have done without my laptop and YouTube tutorials.”  
14-year-old male, Swindon

The other side of this was loneliness. Technology was not a substitute for contact with peers and they talked about how they had missed friends. Moreover, even though it was possible to pursue creative activities in isolation, collective activities like playing in a band were badly missed:

“I still had a trumpet lesson on a Zoom call. That was good. But in terms of a band with other people, even now, when we’re at school, we still can’t do that. Because obviously, it’s unsafe. I am really missing that. I can still play but it’s not the same as playing with everyone else.”  
16-year-old female, Leeds

## 10. They were uncertain about the future and wanted guidance

For some, the experience of lockdown and subsequent changes had made them reframe their ambitions, sometimes because they had experimented with skills during lockdown, or were anxious about the future.

They were interested in more teaching that connected them to the outside world and wanted teachers “to encourage students more and to make sure they feel confident with their future.”

16-year-old male, Sandhurst

“Yeah it made me change my mind because at first I wanted to be a paramedic, but in lockdown I started baking and I really enjoyed it so I decided I wanted to change my career path to become a baker and wedding planner” 15-year-old female, Birmingham

“The pandemic has made me think of alternative options because the break in the middle has affected our education which could and will probably affect grades and effect future jobs”

14-year-old male, South Staffordshire

“I think now I need to be looking for a pandemic-proof career. Something that wouldn't be affected if this were to happen again. I definitely would diversify my money into a few different streams, eg a job and a side hustle.” 18-year-old female, Swindon

“It's made me consider a degree before a law conversion instead of just a law degree as it made me consider learning for the joy of learning and not just for a career.” 17-year-old female, Bristol

Many interviewees expressed a hunger for life skills which they associated with creativity. There was a sense that schools “teach core lessons well but lack on other lessons”

14-year-old male, Swindon.

Life skills they talked about included:

“Managing time better and planning for the future and preparing for college.”

15-year-old female, Sheffield

“Help with like life after school and college. Like my schools have never told me how to pay bills or anything like that which I feel like everyone would benefit from.” 15-year-old female, Birmingham

This interim report has been guided by evidence. We have built on the original research for the Durham Commission which called for greater recognition of the value of creativity in education. This more recent research reaffirms these findings and underlines the importance of action to iron out inequality and best prepare all young people to enjoy, thrive and achieve in their lives.



# ANNEXE 2

# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST DURHAM COMMISSION REPORT 2019

1. A national network of Creativity Collaboratives should be established, in which schools collaborate in establishing and sustaining the conditions required for nurturing creativity in the classroom, across the curriculum. This will involve:
  - a. A three-year pilot of nine Creativity Collaboratives, one in each of the DfE regions. Evaluation of the pilots should inform the creation of a national Creativity Collaboratives network from 2023.
  - b. Funding for the pilot Creativity Collaboratives from a consortium including DfE, Arts Council England and educational trusts. The period of the pilots should be used to explore the possibility of attracting funding from partnerships between DfE, industry and commerce.
2. Government, Ofqual and the awarding bodies should work together over the next two to three years to consider the role of examinations and how scholarship and craftsmanship are recognised and rewarded in assessment frameworks.
3. Schools that have successfully established and sustained conditions in which creativity is nurtured should be recognised and encouraged. Such success should be recognised in the Ofsted inspection process. Ofsted should share good practice case studies of teaching for creativity in a range of subjects and across phases. Ofsted should also continue to refine its inspection framework to further reduce incentives to 'teach to the mark' and make clearer that it is looking for teaching for scholarship and craftsmanship, not merely exam-passing.
4. The DfE should support English schools' participation in PISA 2021 evaluation of creative thinking in order to influence and shape future use of the framework.
5. Higher education institutions, in conjunction with the DfE, should work with the Creativity Collaboratives to develop research-informed practice to evaluate creativity, looking at how creativity and creative thinking can be measured across disciplines, and how its impact can be measured.
6. The education system should support young people to engage creatively and critically with the digital technology that is now a significant part of their everyday lives. To achieve this:
  - a. The DfE should seek additional funding for training for teachers in digital literacy and digital creativity, with time and resource committed to it.
  - b. Nesta should manage a pilot programme working with education, business and the cultural sector to explore how digital education in schools can develop the creative digital skills in demand by employers.
7. Arts and culture should be an essential part of the education of every child. To achieve this:

- a. DfE should establish a funded National Plan for Cultural Education which ensures all children access cultural opportunities in school alongside the new Plan for Music Education and Sport
  - b. DfE should require schools to offer a full national curriculum at all key stages but in particular at KS3 until the end of year 9. This should include the arts as a substantive part of the curriculum, not as an add-on.
  - c. The Artsmark scheme should be reviewed by Arts Council England to ensure the value of creativity, arts and culture in schools is recognised.
  - d. In support of the above, the Arts Council should work with DfE to review the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers in arts subjects and for the cultural workforce and freelancers who work with schools.
8. The purpose and place of creativity and teaching for creativity should be recognised and encouraged in the early years (0-4). To achieve this:
- a. The DfE should integrate creativity into the Early Learning Goals within the Early Years Foundation Stage, to be operational from 2021.
  - b. The DfE should establish and fund effective training and continuing professional development (CPD) for the pre-school workforce, reviewing current CPD opportunities, qualifications and entry routes to the sector by 2021.
  - c. The BBC, other media and broadcasting organisations and the DfE, should further develop quality early years content that encourages young children's creativity alongside literacy and language development.
9. The Commission believes that in-school opportunities to develop creativity should be complemented by diverse routes to take part in creative activities outside of school hours. To achieve this:
- a. The Arts Council, working in partnership with youth sector organisations and social services, should align and build on existing out-of-school opportunities to be creative in the arts, sciences and humanities. This should include the work of Saturday Clubs, Music Education Hubs, existing Arts Council programmes which support out-of-school hours activity, and the National Citizens Service.
10. Young people should be better prepared for the changing world of work. They need the creative capacities that employers seek and which will enable them to be resilient and adaptable, to pursue portfolio careers and engage in lifelong learning. Qualification frameworks should reflect the value of creativity for the current and future workforce.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education should review the current opportunities for developing creativity as a key capacity in emerging T level qualifications and existing Apprenticeship Standards.



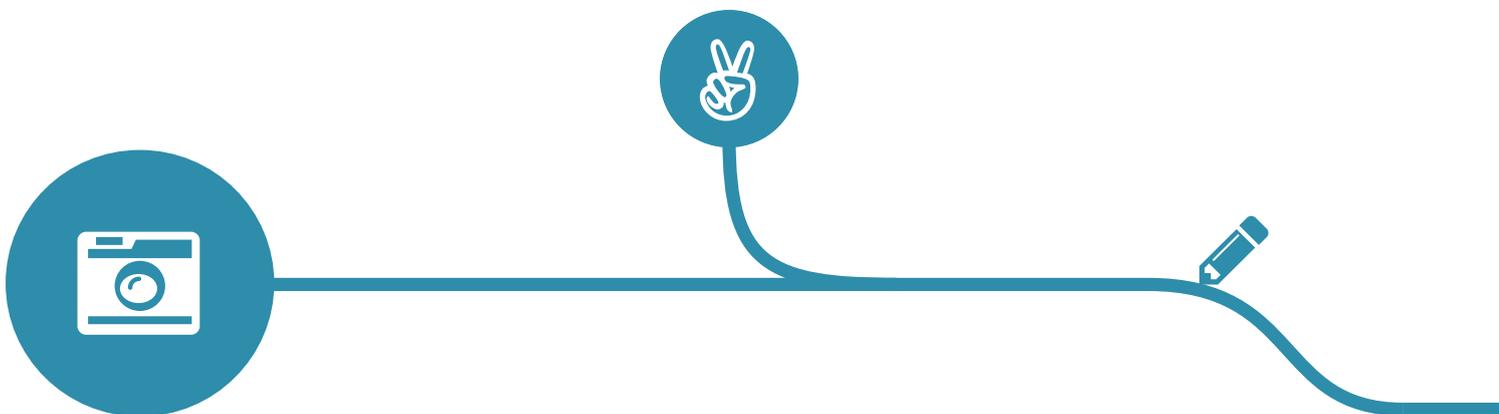
## **ANNEXE 3**

# DURHAM COMMISSION DEFINITIONS

**For the Durham Commission, creativity is:** The capacity to express, imagine, conceive or make something that wasn't there before.

**Creative thinking is:** A process through which knowledge and intuition are applied to make, express or imagine something novel or individual in its context. Creative thinking is present in all human endeavour and in all domains of life, and often requires perseverance, discipline, playing with possibilities and collaboration.

**Teaching for creativity is:** Explicitly using pedagogies and practices that cultivate creativity in young people.





# ANNEXE 4

# THE COMMISSIONERS

The work of the Commission and the first report was shaped and informed by the insights and extensive experience of individual Commissioners and the academic and research teams at Durham University.

The Commissioners		
<i>Chair</i>	Sir Nicholas Serota	
<i>Members</i>	Sir David Adjaye, OBE	Principal and founder of Adjaye Associates Architects
	Lauren Child, MBE	Award-winning children's author and former Children's Laureate
	Sir Jon Coles	Chief Executive of United Learning
	Althea Efunshile, CBE	Chair of National College of Creative Industries
	Dame Reena Keeble	Educationalist and former primary headteacher
	Lord Kerslake	Chair, Peabody Trust
	Imran Khan	Head of Public Engagement, Wellcome Trust
	Akram Khan, MBE	Director of Akram Khan Company
	Baroness Kidron, OBE	Filmmaker and co-founder of educational charity Into Film
	Professor Roger Kneebone	Professor of Surgical Education and Engagement Science, Imperial College
	Anne Longfield, OBE	Children's Commissioner for England
	Professor Linda Merrick	Principal of Royal Northern College of Music
	Jacqui O'Hanlon	Director of Education, Royal Shakespeare Company
	Kathryn Pugh	Headteacher of The St Marylebone CE School, London
	Paul Roberts, OBE	Arts Council England National Council member and Chair of the Innovation Unit
	Phil Stokes	Creative Industries Leader, PwC
Alice Webb	Director, BBC Children's and BBC North	

## The Commission Advisory Board from October 2019

After the publication of the first report, a smaller Advisory Board has taken forward the work of the Commission. Thanks must go to the members for providing their time and expertise.

The Commission Advisory Board from October 2019		
<i>Chair</i>	Sir Nicholas Serota	
<i>Members</i>	Anne Appelbaum	Director, Children & Young People and Learning, Arts Council England
	Dr Helen Charman	Director of Learning and National Programmes, V and A Museum
	Dr Helen Cramman	Assistant Professor (Research), Durham University
	Professor Alan Houston	Vice-Provost (Education) in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, Durham University
	Professor Lynn Newton	Professor, Head of School in the School of Education, Durham University
	Nicky Morgan	Director, Special Projects, Arts Council England
	Kathryn Pugh	Headteacher of the St Marylebone CE School, London
	Paul Roberts, OBE	Arts Council England National Council member and Chair of the Innovation Unit
	Martin Smith	Careers Manager, Access Creative College
	Phil Stokes	Creative Industries Leader, PwC





Durham  
University